

STEPHEN TORREY

A MEMORIAL

BR
1725
.T67
S94
1890

5. 23. 10.

Library of the Theological Seminary,
PRINCETON, N. J.

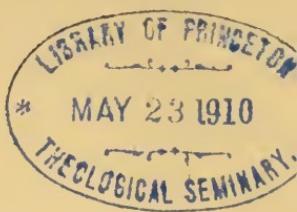
Presented by Miss I. A. Gosman.

BR 1725 .T67 S94 1890

Swift, W. H.,

In memoriam. Rev. Stephen
Torrey

J. A. N.
July 12. 1880



IN MEMORIAM

✓
REV. STEPHEN TORREY

A DISCOURSE

AT

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

HONESDALE, PA.

BY

✓
THE PASTOR, REV. W. H. SWIFT

AT THE MORNING SERVICE

December 15, 1889

CAZENOVIA, N.Y:
PRESS OF W. J. HUTCHINSON,
1890.



*“Twilight and evening bell
And after that the dark,
And may there be no sad farewell
When I embark !*

*“For though from out our bourne
of Time and Place
The flood should bear me far,
I hope to meet my Pilot face to face
When I have cross’d the bar.”*

INTRODUCTORY,

Mr. Stephen Torrey's long and influential connection with the Presbyterian church at Honesdale, led, after his death, to the appropriating of the Sunday morning service of December 15th, 1889, as a service memorial of him. On that morning was delivered the memorial sermon which constitutes the substance of this little book.

When good men die they are not altogether lost to us. Their memory and their influence remain, and they thus bequeath themselves to the church and are a part of its heritage.

The Scripture says to Christians: "All things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, all are yours." That is to say, all good men belong to us, even when they are gone from our sight. We have a certain property in them. We, at this day, are the richer for the holy zeal and Christian heroism of the apostle Paul, and, to this extent, he is ours and cannot be taken from us.

And so, when a good man dies from among us, after a while—after the first bewildering sense of loss is over—we have a "memorial service."

What is the object and meaning of it? It is not a

funeral service this time, nor a burial service. Rather it is a sort of resurrection service. He that seemed to us to be dead is recognized to be living.

And so, at the memorial service we think and speak, not of the good man's death, but of his life—contemplating his excellences, summing up his achievements, computing his worth. And thus, while doing honor to his memory, we are, at the same time, measuring, as best we can, the value of what he has left to us—estimating the worth of our ownership in him, and thus also recognizing the fact that a good man's memory will be honorable in proportion as he has bequeathed treasures of good influence and good example to those who survive him.

Mr. Torrey has left us such a legacy. We come in this service to probate it, and, in a sense, to take possession of it. We are his heirs in the broad kinship of the Christian family—"the household of faith." And it is characteristic of this heritage, as of all spiritual riches, that the administering of much to some of the heirs leaves none the less to others. We are all residuary legatees, so that each one may receive all that has been bequeathed.

To impart this benefit to us is the design and aim of the discourse which will be found on the following pages.

THE SERMON.

"It is a becoming service to embalm the memory of those whose lives have enriched the world in virtue and truth."

IN MEMORIAM.

REV. STEPHEN TORREY.

“For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people were added unto the Lord.”—Acts xi: 24.

BIOGRAPHY is usually interesting, and always, if a correct portraiture of character, instructive.

“History,” some one says, “is a statement of the progress of a nation or an institution, with philosophical enquiries respecting effects and causes.”

But all history arranges itself about individuals, and can be understood only as we know something about the men who made the history. Leave out the individuality of Patriarch, Prophet, and Apostle, and what remains of Scripture history?

Biography is a living commentary on historic truth—a concrete illustration thereof—and so its study becomes, not only desirable, but necessary, if our enquir-

ies respecting causes and effects in history are to be philosophical.

We can read correctly the life of an individual—appreciate it only as we discover the environments under the pressure of, or resisting which, the character was formed. No life reveals itself to us so that we can fully grasp the lessons it teaches till we can trace the trend of its first twenty years.

I could wish, therefore, that some other person, some one acquainted with Stephen Torrey from his youth, had undertaken the pleasant task assigned to me this morning. I enter upon it with diffidence, conscious of no special fitness for it save that inspired by an intimate acquaintance with Mr. Torrey in his later years; a true appreciation of the worth of his life; admiration of his character and loyalty to his memory.

* * *

STEPHEN TORREY, the seventh of eleven children, and fifth of nine sons, the oldest and youngest of whom were Christian ministers, was born in Bethany, Wayne County, Pa., Nov. 9th, 1808. His father was Jason Torrey, who was born in Williamstown, Mass., June 30th, 1772, and removed to Wayne County, Pa., fifteen years before the birth of Stephen. His mother, Lois Welch, was also of New England parentage and birth. She was an earnest Christian woman, and died in 1813, leaving this boy motherless before he was five years of age.

Owing to much necessary absence of his father from

home, his instruction, for a time, was largely left to housekeepers, some of whom, at least, did not claim to be Christian women. By the second marriage of his father, when Stephen was in his eighth year, he came under the instruction and influence of one who was eminently a gifted and devoted Christian woman, Mrs. Achsah, the widow of Rev. Whiting Griswold, a Presbyterian minister.

She, too, was of New England origin, trained to observe New England customs in religious matters, and soon after coming into the family she began the systematic instruction of the children in that matchless compendium of Scripture truth, the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The lucid questions and answers of this book were firmly imbedded in Stephen's memory, and helped to develop a staunch, Calvinistic type of religious convictions and character, and also made him an enthusiastic admirer of the Catechism, and an earnest advocate of its use in the family and Sabbath school as a powerful moulding influence in training the young.

When Stephen was ten years old, a Sabbath school was started in Bethany, one of the first in the State, possibly, north of Philadelphia. The "Order of Exercises" was not elaborate, but consisted mainly, as Mr. Torrey delighted, in the recitation of Scripture committed to memory by the pupils. During the few years he was in Sabbath school, he committed and recited nearly all of the New Testament, and down to the close of his life

could accurately repeat almost any passage of Scripture suggested to him.

In June, 1820, in his twelfth year, sixty-nine years before his death, he was hopefully converted, and in July of that year united with the Presbyterian church of Bethany. He immediately began to take an active part in religious meetings, encouraged so to do by his Sabbath school teacher, Mr. Sheldon Norton, who at the time was Prothonotary of the county. A few months after the boy had publicly consecrated himself to the Christian service, Mr. Norton called on him to lead in prayer at a public meeting. It was Sabbath evening, and the Court House, in which revival meetings were being held, was densely filled. Whatever feelings of timidity or reluctance the boy might have had he did not hesitate, but through the grace which God gave him, rose to his feet and poured out his heart in a prayer which left upon the memory of persons present that evening, an ineffacable impression. It was a foregleam of that power in prayer which has marked his entire Christian life, a gift from God which was kept bright by constant use.

His education began at home. He was early trained to habits of industry, economy, and usefulness. Vacation did not mean idleness; it meant the rest that comes from change of work, and he never knew how to rest in any other way.

His ambition kept pace with his opportunity. An inward energy stimulated him to meet every demand

that duty laid upon him. The keynote of his young life, as of his mature years, was faithfulness.

Between the ages of eight and eighteen we find him, a part of each year, enjoying the advantages of school-life in Bethany and Harford, training his intellectual powers for a career that would task all the talents God had given him.

In 1826 his father began to clear the land where Honesdale now stands, and Stephen was his right-hand man, keeping the accounts, and, when not thus engaged, swinging the axe by the side of the men, doing his full share of manual labor, as he delighted to do down to the close of his life.

The First Presbyterian Church of Honesdale was organized February 11th, 1829. Mr. Torrey was one of its nine charter members, and though but twenty years of age, one of its first Ruling Elders.

His life, from 1824 until 1872, furnishes a chapter in his history that is worthy to be carefully read, earnestly marked, and widely imitated by the laymen of our churches. At the early age of sixteen, Stephen is Superintendent of a Sabbath-school at the old Glass Factory, a mile or more west of Bethany. Next we find him doing similar and more advanced work in Prompton, four miles west of Honesdale, laying the foundation of a church. So consuming is his zeal that, in his earlier life, he is not content to work in one field only, the necessity of other fields appealing successfully to his large heart and untiring courage. It was his habit,

when he began his missionary work, to attend the services of his own church in the morning, and when the church was without a pastor, he frequently read the sermon. Then he would drive to the "Smith Settlement," now Berlin township, where he held a Sabbath-school; then to Paupack, now Hawley, where he had another Sabbath-school; then hold another Sabbath-school, or preach in a school house on his way home. In an interesting article written by him at the request of Rev. Dr. Kendall, and published in *The Church at Home and Abroad*, of March, 1889, he says: "In these days of pioneer Sabbath-school work, when we had no 'helps' but the Bible, much more prominence was given to committing the Scriptures to memory than is customary in these advanced days in Sabbath-school work. Now, the best available talent of the Church is called into requisition to provide helps for Sabbath-schools and Sabbath-school workers. Then, after the recitations of Scripture, as a general rule, I took the whole school in hand and gave such exposition of the lesson, and practical instructions from it, as I was able to give. This method of working, with variations to conform to the changes of circumstances in different neighborhoods, was continued for a considerable number of years, during which time, I extended my work into several remote neighborhoods, where no stated means of grace had ever been introduced. For, at that period this section of Pennsylvania was as emphatically *missionary*

ground as is any portion of our Western country at this day.

"These Sabbath-school services led to the introduction of prayer meetings in some of these neighborhoods, where, for a while, we had two or three persons to participate in the services. But from removals or other causes this help gradually failed, and the responsibility of conducting the services devolved upon me alone. For more than twenty years I maintained my Sabbath evening services in different neighborhoods, till my increasing business responsibilities, at remote distances from home, rendered it impracticable for me to maintain them longer, and I passed them over into other hands. Several church organizations, where the preaching of the gospel is now regularly maintained, and where commodious church edifices have been built and paid for, had their origin in this pioneer Sabbath-school work. As to the number of schools in maintaining which I have been directly interested, about which you make inquiry, I cannot answer definitely; but I had more or less to do with some twelve to fifteen schools, some of which remained on my hands only a limited time, while the responsible care of others devolved upon me for a considerable number of years. I was engaged in this work for about forty-five years, and until I entered upon my presbyterial missionary work, more than sixteen years since."

What a record that of missionary zeal and continuous devotion to the cause of Christ! How sharply

and painfully it contrasts with the easy-going life of too many members of our churches! One can but wonder what the results might be, in a very few years, if, in all *our* churches were found a few men and women whose hearts were fired with the same self-sacrificing love. May God's Spirit baptize us all *for service!*

So successful was Mr. Torrey in this foundation work that, at the age of thirty, he resolved to study for the gospel ministry, and next we find him at Harford Academy, pouring over Latin and Greek with all the earnestness of an aroused soul. A year or two, however, to his great regret, demonstrated the fact that his health would not admit of his pursuing the life of a student, and he reluctantly returned home.

Here he entered with characteristic energy the office of his brother John, then a land-agent, and so earnestly did he devote himself to the practical mastery of surveying that he became, it is said, one of the most accurate surveyors in north-eastern Pennsylvania. This led to his accepting an important position in the land-office of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company, which took him to Carbondale. So interested had he become, however, in his missionary work in Wayne county, that he drove to Honesdale—sixteen miles—every Saturday afternoon or evening; superintended a Sabbath-school the next day, and taught a Bible class; then preached in the evening to a full congregation. This sermon, or address, was of the nature of an expository discourse, and always the result of careful study

and profound thought. Says one: “In my correspondence with him, year after year, his letters indicated always a paramount interest in his parishes and his Christian work. While he was always faithful to his secular business; always thorough and successful in it, he had a supreme interest in his Christian work—‘seeking *first* the kingdom of God.’ He used to arrange his business so as to devote, now and then, a week-day to visiting individuals and families at Prompton, or at Indian Orchard. There were forty years or more, in which he was engaged in his several parishes, almost as steadily as any pastor in his.”

A volume might be written upon the work done by him before 1872, which date, as we shall see, marks an advance—the beginning of a new era—in his career. But time forbids my dwelling longer upon this important period of his life, so unique and suggestive.

Mr. Torrey had married, September 18th, 1833, Mary Chapman, of Durham, N. Y. Three children were born to them. Two of them died in infancy. The third—Jason—a young man of rare promise, and pronounced Christian character, in whom the heart of his father was bound up, died at the age of twenty-nine. Two years later, August 4th, 1870, when absent from home, his beloved and accomplished wife, who had been unable fully to rally after the death of Jason, was also taken. These mysterious providences, breaking up a happy home, which might have embittered the life of a man of weaker faith, only prepared the way for the

special work to which God called him in 1872, at the age of sixty-four.

After the re-union of the Old and New School Churches, in 1870, the Presbyteries of Luzerne, Montrose, and Susquehanna, were united in one—called the Presbytery of Lackawanna. A large number of weak churches were thus grouped together, requiring peculiar care and nurture, and Mr. Torrey was asked to undertake the work of a Presbyterial missionary—a work which would furnish scope for unwearying patience, sleepless vigilance, consummate tact, indomitable will, unfaltering faith, and Christ-like love. With all the ardor of youth he entered upon this work, never faltering in it till the master called him home. If success is measured, not simply by visible results, but by steadfastness of purpose, purity of aim—the earnest effort to realize a high ideal, taking as the motto of life, “This one thing I do,” then Mr. Torrey was grandly successful in his missionary work. His whole soul was absorbed in it. The weak churches were always in his mind and on his heart. Often, after we had puzzled together over some difficult question, and could reach no satisfactory conclusion, the following day he would tell me of some happy solution that came to him during the night watches. Day and night he carried these weak churches in his thought, seeking their welfare, making their burdens his own; and such confidence had the Home Missionary Committee of the Presbytery in his judgment, that oftentimes, I fear, we permitted him

to bear burdens alone, that might have been lightened, had we taken that intelligent interest in these churches, that claimed the sympathizing thought of Mr. Torrey *always*. Who ever heard him pray, save at a funeral, when he failed to carry to God in earnest, confident, touching petition, the feeble churches and distant fields of the Presbytery? He supplied churches with ministers and pastors. He secured young men from our seminaries to labor, during the summer vacations, in fields where, even with the help of the Board of Home Missions, they were unable to support men throughout the year. He went into distant fields as a peacemaker; into discouraged fields to kindle hope; into dormant fields to stimulate faith and zeal, and benevolence; urging the churches to reach the high vantage ground of self-support. Yet, he went always as a burden-bearer; *leading* rather than *driving*; first setting the example and thereby arousing enthusiasm; and the record he has left is that of faithfulness, unselfish endeavor, practical sympathy and helpfulness, and no place in the Presbytery will it be more difficult to fill than that made vacant when God took him from us.

After thirteen years of this vital and fruitful ministry as a licensed preacher, it became evident to the Presbytery that the value of his work would be increased if, by his ordination, he were qualified to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. For this reason, as well as in recognition of his past services, the Presbytery, of its own accord, arranged to meet at

Honesdale on Mr. Torrey's seventy-seventh birth-day, and on that day he was impressively ordained to the gospel ministry. Though he had reached the age when most men lay aside the heavier burdens of life, and, while waiting for the sunset, enjoy a well-earned rest, he regarded his ordination as a fresh baptism for active service, and no crusader could have entered more enthusiastically upon his mission, than did Mr. Torrey, at this advanced age, looking upon it as a call from God for greater consecration to this special work. Had one entered this church, early on the evening of November 9th, 1885—the evening of his solemn ordination—he would have found Mr. Torrey on his knees behind the sacred desk, the tears trickling down his face, as he sought God's blessing upon his ministry. Tears of joy no doubt they were, as he saw fulfilled the hopes of earlier years. At the same time, no young man had a keener sense of personal responsibility as he *began* the work of a Christian minister, than had Mr. Torrey, when standing on the threshold of almost four-score years. This place is sacred because of all the associations of the past; but more so, because baptized with the tears of God's aged servant as he buckles on the armor and, with the courage of youth, goes forth, "counting not his life dear unto himself, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

As we come into closer contact with the life, review

the work and read the character of Mr. Torrey, we cannot marvel that his life was a grand success. It could not be otherwise. It was simply the result of causes and influences that are adapted to produce a character energized, in every faculty, by truth and goodness. His Christian life began at the Cross, when, as a boy of twelve, he became, not a "son of the law," (as the Hebrew boy did at the age of twelve), but a disciple of Him who is the end of the law to every one that believeth. He enthroned Christ as his Saviour and Lord. He always pitched his tent in sight of the Cross; in which he gloried; by which the world was crucified unto him and he unto the world. He was always loyal to Him who had bought him with his own precious blood. He was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and faith, and because he was *genuinely, thoroughly good*, his life, which was only the expression—the outward expression of the inward character—was one of blessing. His Christian influence was felt wherever he was, because he always lived in the presence of Christ—was united to Christ as the branch is united to the vine, and loved to dwell upon the intimate relationship between Christ and the believer.

He was a man of prayer—a man who could not live without prayer. It was his "vital breath," his "native air." He always sought God's guidance at every turn of life. Business and Christian work alike received the baptismal touch of consecration; because both were laid before God in prayer, and his blessing sought upon

each. In his room a tablet, on which his eye rested first every morning, contained these words—the key to his power in prayer: “Abide in me,” “Ask what ye will.” He asked and received, because, abiding in Christ, he came to know Christ as a friend, and so asked for things that were agreeable to his will.

He always “talked with God.” He was strong in faith, giving glory to God. His prayers were marked by great humility, child-like confidence, intense earnestness; and all who listened were conscious of God’s nearness, and so strengthened in faith and life. Mr. Torrey believed with all his heart in God’s willingness to answer prayer, and so took his burdens to God and left them there. A few months since he gave this testimony to God’s faithfulness to his promises: “The memory of the past is precious, affording as it does an occasion of devout thanksgiving to God for all his goodness to me in times of perplexity and intense solicitude to know what, under the then existing circumstances, the Lord would have me do. His assurance, ‘And, lo! I am with you always,’ is unchanged and unchangeable.” He was a man of *one book*. He long ago forgot the Latin and Greek he learned at Harford. When examined in Presbytery, he could answer but few questions in general Church history. He was not acquainted with the technical statements of Mental Philosophy. Of Logic, Rhetoric, and Belles Lettres he knew little. He was not interested in the current news, save as it took on itself a reformatory or religious

aspect. But he was possessed of an extraordinary knowledge of the Bible and Biblical Theology. No one who heard his examination for ordination will ever forget the profound acquaintance with the letter and the spirit of Scripture he evidenced, or the clearness of his statements of doctrinal belief—his answers usually being given in the very language of Inspiration ; yet so simple that a child could understand them. He studied *God's Word* and *men*—human nature; its needs, its limitations. Man made for God: God revealed to man—for man. The Word—the Word made flesh. Man a great sinner: Christ a great Saviour, longing unutterably to save man. How logically and earnestly, with what spiritual power and unction, how persuasively he dwelt upon these and kindred themes ! Strong men were impressed by his *intellectual*, as well as his *spiritual* grasp of the truth and its marvelous adaptability to every occasion. His memory was so stored with Scriptural truth, and the powers of his mind under such perfect control, that he was always prepared to preach, and able, with marvellous lucidity, to present the very heart-thoughts of God's Word. With the Word he comforted God's tired, troubled, discouraged children, strengthened weak, tempted saints, instructed the awakened sinner, and rebuked the infidel. Always bright, because in constant use ; always effective was the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, in his hand. The Word was the man of his counsel, was hidden in his heart, as well as stored in his memory ; was a lamp un-

to his feet, a light unto his path; to it he gave good heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, till the day dawned and the day star arose in his heart. German rationalism, materialistic philosophy, higher criticism did not in the least disturb him. Heaven and earth might pass away; God's word would not pass away; that word would stand forever. He built upon the rock foundation; for he built upon the eternal Word of the Eternal God:—

“Upon the Gospel's sacred page
The gathered beams of ages shine;
And, as it hastens, every age
But makes its brightness more divine.

“On mightier wing, in loftier flight,
From year to year does Knowledge soar;
And, as it soars, the Gospel light
Becomes effulgent more and more.

“More glorious still, as centuries roll,
New region blest, new powers unfurled,
Expanding with the expanding soul,
Its radiance shall o'erflow the world,—

“Flow to restore, but not destroy;
As when the cloudless lamp of day
Pours out its floods of light and joy,
And sweeps the lingering mist away.”

He cared very little for the external proofs of a Divine Revelation; he had the “inner witness” to the truth. So that he received it, “not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which *effectually worketh in them that believe.*”

His tact in approaching men on the subject of religion was very noticeable. He seemed intuitively to know *when* to speak, *what* to speak, and *how far* to press the question, "Why are you not a Christian?" He never introduced the subject in such a way as to embarrass one, or give offence. On all occasions, however, in the most natural manner, he managed to speak of the subject that was foremost in his thoughts. He might stop a stranger on the way, to inquire which road to take in order to reach some point, and though the interview would last but a few moments, would manage to learn in which direction the stranger was traveling—toward God, or away from him. Communing daily, hourly with Christ he could but give expression to the thought of Christ—earnest solicitude for the welfare of men.

His was not a gloomy religious experience, because so prominently spiritual. Far from it. His presence always enlivened rather than depressed society. His own soul was bathed in sunshine, and so his influence was necessarily cheering. He uniformly looked on the bright side, because of his unwavering confidence in God, and this spirit of trust was contagious, so that timid ones, always seeing lions in the way, went from his presence cheered and strengthened.

His life was one of incessant activity. He never seemed to be idle. Possibly his best work was done when, through an accident, he was laid aside for several years from active prosecution of business. More time was found for quiet Christian work—the effort to lead

souls, one by one, to Christ. He showed the same singleness of purpose, whether his companion were a man of great intelligence, or an obscure fellow traveler. He was always *seeking* opportunity to point souls to Christ, so *found* the opportunity. No one could often come in contact with him and say truthfully, "No man cares for my soul." Others might neglect this supreme mission of the Christian; he did not. Because he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and faith, therefore much people was added unto the Lord. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." No "starless crown" is that which rests upon his brow.

He led souls to Christ, but was not satisfied with that. He was always seeking to build souls up in Christ. Regeneration was only the *beginning* of a Christ-life that ought steadily to grow in sweetness, beauty, and power. This he insisted on. Did we hear of a revival in Antioch? Like Barnabas, Mr. Torrey was sent, "who when he came and had seen the grace of God was glad, and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."

He gave himself, his time, his talents, his property to the Lord, to be used in His service, for the building up of His Kingdom. He preached that, when it was possible, a man should be his own executor, and consistently practiced what he preached. In the last few years of his life he gave away, through the channels of

Christian benevolence, between twenty and thirty thousand dollars.

Every young man, just from the seminary, going into one of the destitute fields of the Presbytery, found him a firm friend, a wise counselor, a true yoke-fellow, ready to help in every way in his power, and yet encouraging them to form and carry out their own plans, seeking to develope self-reliance. Is money needed to supplement the salary of the student who, for months, has labored in a barren field, or to repair a church, or build a new one, or remove a debt that stands in the way of usefulness or progress?—he gives; gives wisely, judiciously, always with the intent of stimulating larger benevolence on the part of the church. No young man from the seminary goes back with a burdened heart, because unpaid. All pledges are more than redeemed, all promises abundantly fulfilled. He was not always under the spell of that woe pronounced against those of whom all men speak well. There were times when he was misunderstood by some. There were small souls who thought the *salary* of a Presbyterial missionary was the lode-stone that drew him to the work. But that salary, over and over again, went, not into his own pocket, but to encourage depressed ones, and push on the work at home and abroad. Now to a mission church; now to a discouraged pastor, who gives his note for the amount, and afterwards receives it back cancelled, though not one cent has been paid on it; now to educate a young man

for the ministry; now to a struggling little college in the West; here, there, any where it may be needed, with the one desire to glorify God, he gives. Because he gives, God gives him to give; and meanwhile his character is ripening for eternity. Moreover, when he was at home for a Sabbath, resting, besides attending church morning and evening without fail, he must needs, in the afternoon, find his way to the jail—that neglected field. Here is the testimony of one who knows whereof she writes—the wife of the sheriff of the county: “I have been feeling ever since Mr. Torrey’s death that I wished his good work in visiting the jail might be more generally known. While we lived in the sheriff’s house he began visiting the prisoners on Sunday afternoons, and scarcely ever failed when in town. He always won the regard of even the roughest of them. After prayer and a short talk, Mr. Torrey would go from one cell to another and question them kindly, and draw them on to talk of their troubles, and then administer consolation. My husband generally went with him, and used often to speak of his tact in not asking a single question which could seem to be prompted by curiosity, or be unpleasant for the men to answer. He always appeared so earnest that they soon learned to trust him, and those who were there for months would ask after him, if he were absent for two or three Sundays. In our household the memory of Mr. Torrey will always be cherished.”

“Before honor is humility.” His was the Christ-like

spirit, and so he won the children to him, for he always had a smile and a kind word for them. He no more truly loved to preach to men and women from a text in the Epistle to the Romans, than to talk to the children about the Good Shepherd. His heart was young, even when four-score years had told their experience. I think the children whom God gave to and took from him were always near him. He loved to talk about them, and I know he joyfully anticipated the time when he should again meet them. In a letter received since his death, the writer says: "On one occasion, as I entered my home, I found Mr. Torrey telling the story of Samuel to my boy. The child, about eight years of age, was deeply interested, and at the conclusion he leaned lovingly against the shoulder of his dear old friend and said, 'Mr. Torrey, where are your little boys?' His eyes grew dim as he replied that 'they were waiting for him in another home.'"

While he and I were waiting together for a train, only a week or two before his death (and already that drowsiness that finally overcame him was taking hold upon him), two little children came, several times, into the station, and each time he roused himself and had some pleasant word to say. When the summons came this lover of little children had not far to go before he met that Saviour who, when here upon the earth, took the children in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them, and has since gathered many of the lambs with his arms and carried them in his bosom. He was

a broad-minded, well-rounded man. He believed heartily in the necessity of sustaining and enlarging the work in his own church. His practical encouragement first suggested to us the possiblility of building a new chapel. He realized the necessity of taking an active interest in moral reform, and he, more than any other man in Honesdale, urged Sabbath observance, practical temperance work (his last addresss was for prohibition), the formation of a Law and Order Society, and the claims of the Bible cause. He took an intelligent interest in the missionary work of our Presbytery, and was the first to urge Presbyterial sustentation. He felt intensely the importance of our Home missionary work in the Far West. More than one vacation had been spent by him in visiting the frontier settlements, carrying cheer and sympathy with him, and the Treasurer of the Board of Home Missions can testify to his substantial aid. Christian education found in him a constant friend, and owes his memory a debt of gratitude. But no cause aroused his enthusiasm, or kindled his faith, or inspired his devotion like the *evangelization of the world*. He had visited some of our foreign missionary fields, and was always interested in the latest missionary intelligence, believing with intense conviction in the ultimate triumph of Christ's Kingdom in the earth, and the responsibility and privilege of the individual Christian to obey the ringing command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." What sublime confidence; what hearty con-

secration; what genuine love breathed through his prayer, ‘Thy kingdom come !’ Believing that he who gives quickly twice gives, he was always the first to respond to every cry for help from the Treasurer of the Board. He rests now from his labors, and his works do follow him. Rests ! No, he does not idly rest; he could not. Just before he ceased to work on earth, when the first strains of the heavenly music fell upon his ear, he said to me, “That view of the future is most delightful to me in which we are told ‘Therefore are they before the throne of God and *serve* him day and night in his temple.’” He who served through a long life with ever increasing zeal is still, I doubt not, in the good purpose of God, permitted to labor somewhere.

On Monday morning, June 17th, 1889, after a brief illness, God’s aged servant gently fell asleep. “He walked with God; was not for God took him.” “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.” His influence is a precious legacy to the church; by it he being dead yet speaketh. His character will be more clearly understood as we come to know more truly the pure spirit that dwelt in this tabernacle of clay, and read, as we may, the one purpose of his life—to make more lustrous the name of Him who loved us and gave himself for us, that name which is above every name. He was loyal to Christ; loyal to Christ’s Church; loyal to duty; faithful everywhere; a thoroughly consecrated man; a gentle, humble, loving disciple of Jesus, made meet to

be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. “*And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*” More faith-filled will our lives be because of the impress left upon us by this man of God whose life was inspired by the spirit of Jesus. Farewell, devoted soldier and servant of God! May we follow thee, as thou didst follow Christ, and, too, be ready, when the Master calls us home!



APPENDIX.

The Memorial Service was closed with a hymn of which the first and last stanzas are here given:

“O for the death of those
Who slumber in the Lord !
O, be like theirs my last repose,
Like theirs my last reward !”

* * * *

“With us their names shall live
Through long succeeding years,
Embalmed with all our hearts can give,
Our praises and our tears.”

Thus, with Sermon and Song, the church with which Mr. Torrey had been, not only connected, but to which he had “belonged,” in the fullest sense of that old Saxon word, for more than sixty years, endeavored to express its estimate of his Christian character and the value of his Christian work.

Several weeks after Mr. Torrey had entered upon his

rest, there appeared in *The Church at Home and Abroad*, the following item by Rev. Dr. Kendall, Senior Secretary of Home Missions:— “We have only just heard of the death of Stephen Torrey, at Honesdale, Pa. We wonder that we have seen nothing in the newspapers about it, and we presume something will be prepared by his friends, for the story of Stephen Torrey’s life and labors in his presbytery and in the work of home missions has never been fully told. It is a fruitful story and ought to be well told.” It is hoped that the printing and circulation of this Memorial will satisfy this desire, which has expressed itself, not only from New-York, but also from other great centres of Christian work and influence, as Philadelphia, Cincinnati and Chicago, and from other sources. If anybody cared to print eulogies of Mr. Torrey, it would be easy to do so by reproducing the tender and earnest addresses that were made at his funeral by several of his co-presbyters. But more touching and telling, perhaps, than the testimony of pastor and presbyters was that of prominent, influential, discriminating business men in this and adjoining counties, who, on hearing of his death would exclaim, “*He* certainly magnified the Christian name,” or “*His* religion was a manifest reality.”

A gentleman in Scranton, one of the Superintendents of the Delaware and Hudson Company, who was associated with Mr. Torrey for many years in the service of the Company, and who had known him for more than half a century, and who has a characteristically free and

easy way of saying the most serious things, on hearing of Mr. Torrey's death, said, "When he comes up to the gates, St. Peter will meet him and say, 'Come right in Uncle Stephen, we have been expecting you for a long time, and one of the high seats in heaven is waiting for you.'" That was not a very solemn, but was, none the less, a sincere and graphic way of expressing a feeling that was awakened in hundreds of minds by the memory of Mr. Torrey's remarkable life of guileless fidelity and conspicuous usefulness.

Among Mr. Torrey's papers is an outline plan of a sermon, which, if compactly produced here, omitting the numerous Scripture references, and giving only the several heads, and a single suggestion under each, will both furnish a sample of his method of preaching, and a key to the explanation of his life.

TEXT: Luke xii, 31-34.

31, "Seek ye the Kingdom of God."

32, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

33, "Sell that ye have and give alms."

34, "Where your treasure is there will your heart be."

I. *The Kingdom.* This implies that God is supreme Sovereign, claiming a boundless sway over the souls of men, for their good.

II. *Citizenship.* It implies, of course, an oath of allegiance, and this means, not only loyalty, but a patriotic zeal for the extension of the Kingdom.

III. *The means.* The preaching of the gospel is the recognized means of extending the Kingdom.

IV. *The duty.* Hence the duty of all Christians to be heralds, and to contribute for sending the messengers of the Kingdom

throughout the earth, and for furnishing all needed accessories to their work, such as houses of worship, &c.

V. *The encouragement.* Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."—i. e. However small the beginnings, and apparently feeble the instrumentalities, the ultimate triumph is sure.

VI. *The method.* "Sell that ye have and give alms."—i. e. Make your earthly treasures clearly subordinate to the Kingdom.

VII. *The reward.* "A treasure in the heavens that faileth not." Your gold and silver shall be transmuted into spiritual and everlasting riches.

VIII. *The reflex influence.* He that seeks the Kingdom of God will thereby exalt his whole nature. "For where your treasure is there will your heart be also."—i. e. Elevated as your controlling purposes are, will your character be.

Any person acquainted with Mr. Torrey's manner can imagine with what glowing ardor he would fill out the several divisions of this comprehensive plan. And for the reason that it was all as clear as life to him. He was *living* that sermon day by day, and year after year.

Whether in his daily home life, or in his Indian Orchard parish, or in his Presbyterial rounds in the coal regions of Pennsylvania, or on his several trips across the continent, among the Home mission fields of the vast West, or among the Foreign missionary stations of northern Syria, and far up the Nile in Egypt, he manifested a ceaseless feeling of personal responsibility to be doing something for the "Kingdom" which was there and everywhere. To seek the Kingdom of God was the fervent impulse of his heart and the steady business of his life.

The cheerful diligence with which he pursued his

work, is illustrated by the statements of a brother minister who writes thus: "After Mr. Torrey had been several years in the ministry, he was wanted, at one time, by the Delaware and Hudson men, for a fortnight, to do a delicate piece of surveying, the conditions of which he understood better than any body else. About Thursday of the second week he was writing me on some Presbyterial business, and added that he was feeling a good deal used up. I replied very promptly and said, 'No wonder you are used up; you are attempting impossibilities. Don't you remember the Master said, *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon?*'

"The next Monday he wrote me saying, 'The Master's rules evidently do not apply to my case. I *did* feel much run down the last of the week, but took a good dose of preaching three times and attending one Sunday-school yesterday, and have come out all right this morning.'"

While he was always a working Christian, it would be a mistake, as has been said in the sermon, to suppose he was only that. He was genial in society. He was always ready to be playful with children and playful with friends. He was a hearty laugher, enjoyed a joke, was ready at repartee, giving as good as he received. He was a *happy* man. His busiest industry never made him morose, or even unsociable. His spirit of unbending faithfulness was sweetened by a spirit of gentleness and love.

While the text, "Seek ye the Kingdom of God," fur-

nishes the key to his character as a *worker*, the key to his entire character is found, perhaps, in those words applied to him at the very close of the Sermon:—"He followed Christ."

Herein, after all, do we find the measure of his worth and the Divine approval of his character.

St. Paul was giving to certain Christians the encouragement of his praise, when he said, "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart, known and read of all men."

That man is unmistakably right whose life brings you a constant message from Christ; across the front of whose daily living the Spirit of God has written the lineaments of the Saviour's character; the pureness and rectitude of whose spirit and purposes are always drawing you toward Christ.

Such a man was Mr. Torrey, as it seemed to his brethren. In his business life, in his social life, from morning to night, from Monday morning to Sunday night, from New-Year's day until the 31st of December, and from the time he was twelve years old till he gathered up his feet to die, and was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom, he seemed to be swayed, controlled, guided, by such principles, aims, purposes, as could only flow into his life from the Spirit and teachings of Jesus.

That combination of firmness and gentleness in him

which made his character so substantial and yet so lovable, so strong and yet so sweet, was the result of receiving and working into the actual current of his life, from first to last, that “wisdom which cometh from above, and which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”

Such a life is worth living. Such an example it is safe to follow. The abiding influence of the memory of such a spirit is a precious legacy, for which we cannot be too thankful.

“**N**OW just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked after them, and behold the city shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold; and in them walked many men, with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises withal.

“There were also those that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, singing, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord.

“And after that they shut up the gates, which, when I had seen, I wished myself among them.”



Princeton Theological Seminary Speer Library



1 1012 01045 3282